11630.d.14
4

PASTORAL ELEGY.

Illo non Juvenis poterit de funere quiſquam
Lumina, non Virgo ſicca referre domum.

Tib. Lib. 1. Eleg. 1.

LONDON:
Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in Pall-Mall; and ſold by M. COOPER, in Pater-noſter-Row. 1759.
(Price Six-Pence.)

PASTORAL ELEGY.

Illo non Jovem potuit de Nocte quæsivit
Lenius, non Virgo Jovem reflavit domum.

Tib. Lib. 1. Eleg. 1.

LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-Mall; and sold by M. Cooper, in Pater-noster-Row. 1759.

(Price Six-Pence.)

A

PASTORAL ELEGY.

SWEET is the balmy breath of ſummer eve,
What time along the twilight lawns I rove,
From the green turf the honied vapours heave,
And cooling breezes curl the duſky grove.

Now muſing Melancholy loves to ſtray,
And views with penſive look the pale Moon riſe;
Silent ſhe holds her ſolitary way,
Enjoys the dank dew and the ſhow'ry ſkies.

Late as I rang'd the woodland vale more deep,
I met the wand'rer in a pathleſs walk;
I call'd her ſiſter, for I ſaw her weep,
But ſtill ſhe ſhun'd th' impertinence of talk.

At length ſhe led me to her darkling cell,
An ancient tow'r with ivy mantled o'er,
(Where the lone-moping owl delights to dwell)
Hard by, a green lake midſt ſome willows hoar.

Within the walls are moſs and cobwebs all,
Save where the trickling cryſtal forms its way,
And on the floor, each wakening ſenſe t' appal,
Duſt-mould'ring bones in dread confuſion lay.

Of theſe one chapleſs ſkull ſhe ſeem'd to prize,
On which her arm reclin'd to raiſe her head;
And ſtill on this ſhe fix'd her fondling eyes,
And look'd like Venus o'er Adonis dead.

Ere long her falt'ring voice ſhe 'gan eſſay,
'And welcome, gentle ſwain, ſhe feebly ſaid;
'Thy tears more grateful than the dew of May,
'Speak thee with me in ſolemn ſadneſs read.

'Full oft, what time the flocks are drove to fold,
'I've mark'd thy wayward gait and penſive brow,
'And, for with woe ſuch ſympathy I hold,
'I lov'd thee for the ſorrows thou didſt know.

'Learn

'Learn then what ſhock, in my prophetic eye
'Impending, threatens this devoted vale;
'The gath'ring ſheep denote ſome danger nigh,
'And forms are ſeen that turn the ſhepherd pale:

'The lark no longer ſeeks the dazling day;
'My Philomel withholds her evening ſong;
'Death-boding ravens hover in the way;
'And horrid ſcreech-owls their alarms prolong.

'Ah! hither bend thy pitying looks, for here
'Remorſeleſs Death is doom'd to do a deed,
'That from the general eye will aſk a tear,
'And claim of me ſome more impaſſion'd meed.

'Too ſoon ſhall Anguiſh tell with trembling tongue,
'At length is come the ominated Woe:
'Then catch this lyre, and all as it is ſtrung,
'Strike the ſad ſtrains that in thy boſom glow.'

Thus much ſhe ſaid, and ended with a ſigh;
Unus'd to ſing, fearful I took the lyre:
And now the warning impulſe throbbing high,
This ſong of ſorrow breathes the promis'd fire.

The wood-nymphs weep the faireſt of their throng,
And fling their roſy-wreathed chaplets by,
' No more Eliza roves theſe walks along,
' With her the flowrets and their fragrance die.'

Swift flies the ſound to yonder craggy ſteep,
Where Echo ſlumbers on her airy bed:
Sudden ſhe wakes; and wildly ſeems to weep,
As wide around the wretched tale is ſpread.

Anon the deathful knell invades mine ear;
Solemn and ſlow it rolls along the ſky;
In ſilent grief the liſt'ning ſhepherds hear,
Till from each boſom burſt the ſwelling ſigh.

To the dark manſions of their kindred dead,
A mournful troop comes winding o'er the plain;
From whoſe pale hand their gloomy ſhadow ſhed
The cypreſs black, and yew of mortal bane.

By virgins deck'd, on virgin ſhoulders born,
The child of death in ſmiling beauty lies;
Dipt in the dew of Heaven's eternal morn,
An angel's roſeate fingers clos'd her eyes.

On either ſide the white-rob'd nymphs attend,
The late companions of her harmleſs hours,
On whoſe bright cheek the roſe and lilly blend,
And paint a flow'r bedew'd with vernal ſhow'rs.

In darkneſs wrapt, with falt'ring ſtep and ſlow,
Domeſtic Sorrow leads her languid train;
A ſtedfaſt horror ſits upon her brow,
And ſtops the ſtream that ſtrives to eaſe her pain.

The ruſtic many mingled all among,
Soft Sympathy delights to gaze on Grief;
Till the big tear, throughout the ſhepherd throng,
Hang like the dew-drop on the various leaf.

This tribute virtue claims, this tender boon
Still fondly follows beauty's early bier:
Nor all unwept is loſt Eliza gone;
Pride of the flow'ry plains, and ſmiling year.

Of form leſs fair the graceful myrtle ſprings,
Nurſt in the boſom of the genial May;
Tho' Zephyr fan it with ambroſial wings,
And Phœbus view it with a fonder ray.

Each lovely hue with which the fancy plays
Or in Pomona's, or in Flora's bow'r,
And on the cheek of Beauty laviſh lays,
Bloom'd thro' the whole with animated pow'r.

Her mind was all that firſt-form'd Innocence
Expreſt in youthful Nature's happy prime;
Hence flow'd each great, each milder influence,
That renders virtue tender or ſublime.

With more of ſoftneſs than maternal love,
Each pain ſhe felt that met her pitying view;
All but her own; and theſe ſhe nobly ſtrove,
In filial fondneſs, vainly to ſubdue.

O gentle Firmneſs! lovely Piety!
With ſenſe more ſprightly than the dawn of day!
Vaniſh'd an heav'n-ſent viſion from our eye,
So barely ſhown, and early ſnatch'd away.

Where were you then! ye ſpirits of holy men!
Ye ſainted maids that join our pray'rs in heav'n!
Ah! where your cares, your fond attention then,
Ere yet the many-wounding blow was giv'n?

Friends

Friends of mankind, ye guardian angels, ſay,
What dearer charge claim'd your protecting wings?
May nought avail what friends can weep or pray?
Nought all the vows parental paſſion brings?

Hail then to Horror! hail thou houſe of Death!
And all the ſolemn pageantry of woe!
Hail hapleſs pair! whoſe ſighs ſtill ſwell each breath;
Whoſe ſacred ſorrow no relief may know.

Did your fond loves produce the loſs you mourn?
Your mutual cares the lov'd production rear?
Then weep, Affection; what from thee is torn
Tho' Heav'n enjoy, yet Heav'n approves thy tear.

On a lone tree in ſome ſequeſtered vale,
Where late the ſtock-dove held her happier reſt,
Reft of her young, ſhe pours the plaintive tale,
And mourns the ruin of her childleſs neſt.

There Nature acts, nor ſcorn that Nature here,
To hold Philoſophy a wiſer friend,
Whoſe precepts, often render'd too ſevere,
Deſtroy humanity, and balk their end.

The weakneſs ſure is nobler that muſt weep,
When virtue ſuffers, or untimely dies,
Than the dull art that lulls the ſoul to ſleep,
And good and bad beholds with equal eyes.

Receive me then, no ſtranger or to woe,
Or ſofter ſympathy, in Sorrow's train;
The weeping wood-nymphs follow where I go,
And fondly cheriſh no unpleaſing pain.

Hither ſhall veiled Piety repair,
In decent grief to grace theſe obſequies;
At this fair altar ſhall prefer her pray'r,
And breathe the ſigh of incenſe to the ſkies.

Hither the meek-eyed Modeſty ſhall tend,
Cloſe wrapt in mantle of cerulean hue:
Sincerity, Affliction's faireſt friend,
Here pay the pious boon to friendſhip due.

Simplicity in ruſtic neatneſs dreſt,
Shall quit her fleecy care theſe rites to join:
And ſober Conſtancy in widow'd veſt,
Each day with pale lip kiſs the holy ſhrine.

And laſt in darkeſt robe of ſable caſt,
With muſing ſtep ſhall Melancholy come;
Here fix her cold embrace ſo firmly faſt,
To ſeem one ſubſtance with the marble tomb.

Still at the twilight hour of eve we'll meet,
And wet the hallow'd ground with grateful tears;
Here ſtrew each flowret that ſo late was ſweet,
With every leaf that ſeeming ſadneſs wears.

Then with full voice a ſolemn requiem chaunt,
The peaceful ſleep of Innocence to charm,
Of ghoſt unlaid to croſs the impious haunt,
And awe the violating hand of Harm.

Theſe pious duties done, no rites forgot,
In what remains beyond our mortal guard,
Let watchful angels keep this ſacred ſpot,
And every black impending miſchief ward.

Fly far from hence the lightning's fearful flaſh;
Nor ſtrike thou here, all-dreaded thunder-ſtone!
Hark! the hoarſe raven from yon rifted aſh,
Invites your rage to end what it begun.

So

So ſhall the ſainted ſoul ſecurely reſt,
Beyond the regions of the riſing day;
Nor rob'd in radiance fill the ſhepherd's breaſt,
In homeward walk, with terror and diſmay.

Peace then thy aſhes, gentle Shade, attend;
The ſwain, whoſe rural lays thy loſs deplore,
Invokes thee once, ere yet his ſong ſhall end,
Then drops the lyre, perchance to ſing no more.

Look down, bleſt Spirit, from thy ſtarry ſphere,
Approve the honeſt grief that decks thy ſhrine;
So ſhalt thou pardon the unhallow'd tear,
That wiſhes mortal what is made divine.

FINIS.